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Persuasions to a Publick Spirit.

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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd Before the
COURT of GUARDIANS

OF THE
P O O R

IN THE
CITY of BRISTOL,

AT
St. PETER'S CHURCH,

On Thursday the 13th of April, 1704.

To which is added a List of the Benefactors for setting the Poor on Work.

By CHARLES BRENT, M. A. Rector of
Christ-Church and *St. Werburge*, Chaplain to the
Duke of *Richmond*.

L O N D O N:

Printed for John Wyat at the Rose in St. Paul's Church Yard. 1704

BRISTOL,

Court of Guardians,
Apr. 25. 1704.

Order'd that the Thanks of this Court be return'd to Mr. *Charles Brent*, for his Sermon preach'd the 13th Instant, before the Governour and Guardians of this Corporation ; And that he be desired to print the same ; And that Sir *John Dudlestone*, Bar. Mr. *Thomas Hopper*, and Mr. *William Martin*, be desired to acquaint him therewith.

J. Davis Cl.



The Publick Dedication

To the Worshipful the Governour, and
Deputy-Governour, the Assistants, and
Guardians of the Poor in the City of
Bristol.

Gentlemen,

I Could make no Difficulty to comply with your Request in sparing a few Words abroad in Favour of the Good Work you are engag'd in: Your Opinion that this Discourse might be useful was a sufficient Reason, above all private Scruples, that I ought to part with it; for I look upon it a needless, affected Piece of Modesty, to withhold any thing of this Kind, which, in the Judgment of others may do Good, howsoever meanly we our selves may think of it: And I could not be guilty of excusing my self to you, without standing impeach'd by my own Argument.

to persuade men
The Design of it is, to be publick-spirited; to come out of the little enchanted Circle of Self-Interest, and act for the Common Wealth and Honour. We who live in particular Corporations, see some Survivings of this good old Spirit among us; and I hope it is not gone utterly out of Date with those who

The Epistle Dedicatory.

minister for the main Body of the Nation : 'Tis Pity that any great Man pretending to it should look singular ; and no Wonder if our Successes have run accordingly.

When I have seen with what indefatigable Zeal and Application some among you have set your selves to serve your City, and how much more nearly you seem to make the Prosperity of it your own Concern, than even the Affairs of your own Family, I have wish'd you higher Spheres to extend and move in.

I should be unjust to your Body, not to take this Occasion of mentioning your present worthy Governor ; who has as many, and charming Temptations to confine his Cares at Home, as any Man living can have, and yet, with what an unwearied Diligence he has bestowed himself at the Publick Chamber, the Bench of Justice, and at the Court of Guardians, (passing over in Silence the Dayly Services he does to prop up private Families) is so well known, that I do not mention it for Information, but for Examples Sake : What a promising and hopeful Turn his Care and Management gave to the Posture of your Affairs the last Year, is best acknowledg'd by you, in choosing him unanimously to the Chair again. May the good Providence of God prosper your Endeavours, that

The great
Work-
House..

your Work in the * Mint may look this Year toward some Perfection! A good old Pile ; which, for two notable

The Epistle Dedicatory.

notable Undertaking in it, will be ever famous! There but a few Years ago, we saw Cæsar's Image and Supercription stamping on our Treasures, and there we now behold the Image of God, in some Measure, repairing upon our poor and needy Youth. A glorious Change and Improvement indeed!

While Men of enterprizing and publick Spirits set themselves heartily to the Support of any Cause, it will scarce be possible for that Cause, if a good one, to sink: And, methinks, when such an Illustrious and God-like Example of that Kind shines out from the Throne, it cannot choose but catch, and take Fire, in the Spirits of all those great ones who wait her Orders and Commands: A Queen so perfectly given up to the general Wealth and Good, must needs bring again in Fashion that ancient Bravery and Honour, for which this Nation has been so much renowned: And it is high time that our Rage and Indignation should push us on, when the French, whom we have so often made our Vassals, shall send us Word, upon every Prize they take, how basely we are degenerated: How little they fear us: How much they scorn us. Surely if the Men of high Abilities, instead of jostling out one another for the Profit of great Places, would give their Hearts to contend and rival for the Grandeur and Glory of England, we might still hope to see Affairs take another Turn.

And

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*And, O that we could hear our Worthy's stomach-
ing for their Honour, like the Chiefs of ancient Ju-
dah! Have we eaten at all of the King's Cost?
Or has he given us any Gift? --- That there were
found among us in this Age, an Aristides, manag-
ing for many Years the publick Revenue, and, in the
highest Posts both Civil and Military, performing a
Life of Wonders, and yet, to the greatest Wonder of
all, be forced at last to be buried at the Publick Charge;
an otherguese's Glory to his Memory, than if he had
left behind him Millions. ---- That our Country
could now boast the Peer of Cincinnatus, who being
fetch'd from the Plough to snatch the sinking Common-
Wealth from Ruine, no sooner overthrew the Danger,
retrieved the State, and triumpht, but threw off the
Dictator, and returned to Plough again!*

*But what need we cross so far over Seas and Ages,
and search old Judah, Greece, and Rome for Ex-
amples of the Publick Spirit? This happy Isle has
been as fruitful of Worthies, as any Spot of Ground
upon the Globe. Where are the Essexes, and How-
ards, who fitted out great Fleets, in Part at their own
Expenice, to serve their Country? Where is that pro-
found States-Man Walsingham, who after long and
signal Services done in a high Station of the Ministry,
died so poor, that his Friends were forced to slide him
under Ground by Stealth, for Fear his Body should be
arrested*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

arrested for Debt? I choose to glance at the Chiefes of a Female Reign, to show, that the English have bravely play'd the Men, when they have had a Mistress in the Throne to adventure for. And why should not the Name of Anne inspire them to perform with the same Faith and Honour, as that of Elizabeth? Her Goodness and Majesty is no less worthy, for whom they should signalize their Virtue, and her Reign affords them as great and pressing Occasions to prove it.

But I begin to be sensible I have let my self upon the Ramble, tho' I cannot say far out of Bounds neither; because I have had my Subject all along in View. And, you know, some things may be freely said in an Epistle, which may not be spoken aloud in the Pulpit; after all, I have this to bear me out in the Liberty I have used, that not one Word has fallen from me in these Sheets, but what has been religiously meant to inculcate the Precept, upon which the following Discourse is rais'd: To the serious Perusal, and Practice whereof, I heartily recommend you, and so take Leave: Assuring you that I am, with all imaginable Respects.

Gentlemen,

Your most humble Servant,

CHARLES BRENT.

Advertisement.

AN Essay concerning the Nature and Guilt of Lying. By *Charles Brent*, M. A. Printed for *John Wyat* at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church Yard*.

I Cor. X. 24.

Let no Man seek his own, but every Man anothers Wealth.

THESE Words being general, we are free to enlarge the Instruction of them to as great a Latitude as we please : And they contain a very applicable and useful Rule of Conscience. In the special Case that lay before the Apostle, about *eating of the Idol Sacrifices*, they advise to this Effect : *Let no Man so scandalously consult his own private Freedom, and Indulgence as to have no Regard at all to the Welfare and Edification of weaker Brethren.* To Men whose Abilities present them to the Publick Trust and Service, they give this Honourable Charge : *Let no Man sordidly seek his own private Interest, but every Man the Prosperity and Glory of the Nation.* In this Sense the Text may seem now a very dry, and tasteless Maxim ; but the greatest Men of former Ages had a quick and lively Relish of it : 'Twas the sole Principle upon which they gloriously enterpriz'd, and rais'd their everlasting Monuments. ---Not to follow Instances too far out of my present View. ---To Men call'd to a Condition of doing piously and charitably, the Words do exhort you in this wise : *Let no Man contrive and care altogether for himself, but every Man have a merciful Regard to the Difficulties and Necessities of other Men.*

Now to make the Words appear, in this Sense, a Maxim full of Wisdom and Obligation, I shall need only drop

drop this one Note, for the right Understanding of them; namely, That when the Apostle adviseth, *Let no Man seek his own*, he does by no Means discharge and forbid Men from consulting their own private and family Concerns; he only takes it for granted, that Nature would sufficiently prompt them to do this of Course; if they have any Sense of Interest at all, they will be sure to mind their own without bidding: But, in Consideration that self-love lay so much at the Root of all the living World, and seem'd the governing, uncontrollable Law of all our Actions and Designs, the Apostle's Aim is, only to unchain and release our Minds from under the Tyranny of this Principle, and set us a little at Liberty, to contribute to the Welfare of other Men, as well as our own.

If he had meant to call Men wholly off from seeking their own *Wealth*, to mind the *Wealth* of others, he had destroy'd the Wisdom of his own Precept by overcharging it, and made an excellent Maxim good for nothing: For it is necessary that all the *meaner* People do industriously *seek* and labour after their own *Welfare*, that they may not become too great a Charge and Burthen to the Cares of other men; and the *wealthier* had need have a diligent Eye to their own Affairs, that they may be the more amply qualified to communicate to the Relief of those, who are unable and insufficient for their own Maintenance: Wherefore, the full Length of my Design upon the Words, is only so far to exhort and encourage you to a Publick Spirit, that the Time and Cost you can conveniently spare from your own Families, may be freely and generously bestowed on the Relief of those, whose Necessities the Providence of God has charged upon you. Accordingly the Proposition I shall insist on, from the general Precept before me, is this, *viz.*

That

That, instead of being absolutely confin'd and stinted to your own private Interests, you stand oblig'd, as far as your Occasions can spare you, to endeavour and contribute heartily toward the common Welfare and Good of other Men : Let no Man seek his own, but every Man anothers Wealth.

Now in Order to turn this Proposition to the best Account I can toward the present Occasion, my Work shall be,

I. To touch your Hearts with the Reasons that should move you to be, upon the general, of a Charitable, Beneficent, and Publick Spirit. And then,

II. To persuade you, That those Reasons should have special Force to dispose you to the great Work whereunto you are now chosen, as that wherein your Labours will be laid out for the Publick, to the highest and best Advantage.

I. First then, to touch your Hearts with some of the many Reasons that should move you to be, upon the general, of a Charitable, Beneficent, and Publick Spirit ; Let it be consider'd,

i. In the first Place, That to do all the Good you can in your Sphere, is the principal End God had in creating (and your City in choosing) you what you are. That Maxim has ran thro' the Religion of all Ages, that *we are not made for our selves alone*, but for the mutual Support and Good of one another. When St. Luke observes of David, that *after he had served his* ^{St. 13 A. 36} *own Generation, by the Will of God, he fell asleep* ; it is imply'd plainly, that till his Time was come to *fall asleep*, it was the Will of God that he should *serve his Generation* : It is for this End that every Man is rais'd

up, and if we do not heartily apply our selves to it, we deserve to be pull'd in Pieces again: For I do not know of any thing that can so conveniently be spared, and would be so little miss'd out of the World, and that goes with that general Consent, as one who lives altogether to himself, and is concern'd for none other Interest or Good but his own. Consider,

2dly, That to do all the Good you can for others, and the Publick, is a Debt of *Nature* and *Equity*, that you owe to Mankind; you being no more able to self-subsist, than other Men are, without the common Offices and Aids of one another. There is but one independent Being in the World, and that is God; and therefore there is but that one Being that can pretend to live without being beholding. The Wisdom of Providence has so contriv'd the State of this World, that we must all depend on one another; and no Man is self-sufficient: even *the King himself is serv'd by the Field*. Just as in the *main Universe*, every little Part of Matter is of some Account and Use to the whole, so it is in the *Microcosm* Man, that *World in little*; take him in a Collective Body, or Society, and every individual Man has his Share of Duty toward sustaining the whole; take him in his single Capacity, and every distinct Member of himself must rely upon the good Offices of one another, to maintain the whole Man in Condition: So that *the Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you.*

1. Cor. 12.
21.

And for the Encouragement of every Member, both in natural and civil Bodies to be serviceable to the whole; remember that the Virtue of good Deeds is always circulating, and the Benefits done by every private Man to the Publick, will be sure to return, in some kind or other, back to the Benefactor, just as a flowing River, which gives down liberally into the *Main*, shall,
out

out of the main Treasure of Waters, be as liberally supplied and reimbursed. And as our Services to the Community, are a natural and just Debt, for the Share of Comfort and Good we enjoy as Members of it; so as long as we are willing to *do good, and to communicate*, we have the same equal Right to be regarded in our Necessities: and it would go against Nature, and give Humanity Abhorrence, to see an Instance of one, who has given himself heartily to do good to others, suffering and sinking under the Burthen of his own Misfortunes. You should also consider,

3dly, That all those greater Abilities and Blessings, which you unequally enjoy above your Brethren, were not given you purely for your own Sakes, or because you better deserv'd them; but for their Sakes whose Necessities are always craving from you: And you have no other Way of showing your selves worthy of what you have received, but by dispensing liberally on all fit Occasions. With Respect to Man, you may call what you possess your Property, but with Respect to God nothing is properly your own: For, *what hast thou which thou didst not receive*, and which is not his upon Demand again? Now he does demand of thee, that thou do good, and distribute in Proportion to thine Abilities, as conscientiously as if it were as much the Needy's Right as thine own: And such a Mind and Spirit as this we read the first Christians entirely given up to. *Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possess'd was his own, but they had all things common.* 1 Cor. 4. 7. Act. 4. 32.

But what the Miser keeps hoarding up, is so far from being a common Good, that 'tis not what he can dare to use as his own, but is so much perfectly lost for his Time out of the World. And howsoever such Men may value themselves, all their Lives long, for what they shall

shall leave behind them, yet they may rest assured of this before-hand, that they shall have little Thanks for the Largeness of their Leavings, but many a bitter Look for leaving it no sooner. They are, at best, but the Stewards of what God gave them, and he has left them a large Family to be cared for out of the Interest of it; *moreover, it is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful, in Proportion to what he receives; Lu. 12.48. for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: And the great Rule for dealing out the Blessings of God is, Freely ye have received, freely give. It will therefore be a poor Priviledge, and a sorry Plea for the Miser to say, at the last Hour, when his Lord shall call him to Account, Behold, Lord, the exact entire Sum I have been extorting from thy Providence all my Days, laid up rusting under Iron Security! lo, there thou hast that is thine again, for I can keep it no longer! He who knit his Talent up in Napkins, and hid his Lord's Money in the Earth, was condemn'd for a foolish and wicked Servant. But let us rise a little higher in our reasoning for a Charitable and Publick Spirit; and consider,*

4thly, That it is a Character springing out of the noblest Frame and Disposition, is Proof of the best and hopefullest Temper in human Nature, and flows from a Principle altogether Godlike: There is no Force of Law to constrain us, but we are led to do Good of our own mere Inclination; and therefore Acts of this Kind look above the Notion of bare Duty, and have rather the Resemblance of Free Grace; And being always the Testimony of a liberal Heart, an active Spirit, a generous Mind, and a great Soul; who would not for the Character's Sake, fall in Love with the Employment?

Whereas there is no surer Proof of a grovelling, low, degenerate Nature, than to hint all our Cares and

and Diligencies to our selves; as if it were enough that our Turns are served, tho' all Mankind besides perisheth: The Mind and Soul of such a Wretch, is lively laid open, and the Miser fairly unfolded in that Motto, *quæ hæc & vana munda ævæ. When I am dead, let the Creation catch all on Fire.* Who can place the Figure of such a selfish, unrelenting Mortal before his Mind, and not turn from it with Contempt? A little insignificant Weight encompass'd within the Verge of his own Cares and Affluences, like the Center Point in a Circle, a thing of no Reality or Account in Nature; substantial only in his own Imagination; and yet toward this imaginary thing, must every Line draw inward, and every Aim and Design terminate; every thing Centring in himself, himself the mean while a mere Cipher. Bespeak him of a profitable Purchase, and his Ears and Heart are wide open, and he will look liberally upon you; but present your self before him in *Forma Pauperis*, an apparent Object of Charity, and how will his little Soul gather in, and shrivel up, and shrink away to nothing? His whole Delight is, to wrap himself up warm in his own Condition: The Peace of his Conscience seems to be placed in this, that he can say to his Soul; Soul, *Lx. 12. 19. thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years!* his most religious Affiance is here, He saith unto Gold, *thou art my Hope*, and, unto fine Gold, *thou art my Confidence*: And the greatest and uppermost Satisfaction of his Life seems to be, that others miserably want, while, blessed be God, he has enough, and to spare. He stands close by himself under Covert, from the Storms of this World, and places all the Comfort of his Shelter in fancying within himself, how lamentably other Men are exposed. Any one who is not gone perfectly shameless, will come out of such a narrow Character and Condition, and do a little publick Good, if it be but to shake off publick Infamy.

Infamy. But I am speaking to a Society of Men who appear with Spirits large enough for Emulation: Permit me therefore to lead you still higher in the present Argument, and show you

5thly, What great and illustrious *Presidents* you have to imitate in the Way of doing Good. If among Men any one Person be raised high above the rest in Majesty and Power, it is purely to enable him to do the greater Good: And the biggest Monarchs are made mighty and over-ruling above their Fellow Creatures, for none other End but to serve the People they govern: *He is a Minister of God to thee for good.* So then to be ambitious of serving Mankind, is to copy after the Character, and Capacity of Princes.

Next above them, the holy Angels have their Ascendant: And those, we are told, are all ordain'd to this Employment. *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be Heirs of Salvation?* To do good then is a Seraphick Exercise; 'tis the Province of Angels.

Above them we come in View of the Son of God, who is so much higher, and *better than the Angels*: And whither are we now *caught up*, in the Spirit of this Duty? even to him, *who sits at the Right Hand of Majesty on high*; and yet his most exalted Dignity, his very God-head, did not exempt him from doing the very lowest Offices, and bearing the most barbarous sufferings, for the Good of Mankind: *that God came down to us*, not only in the *Likeness*, but the real Nature of a Man for this End: And, while a Man among us, *he made the Service of his Generation his whole Delight* *Mar. 37. 7.* and Business; *He went about doing good. He did all things well. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.* *Lk. 19. 10.* And though Men would foolishly contend, and clamour, and cry out against him; and the Language of their

their Hearts was like the Reviling of those *foul Spirits* in the Gospel, *what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us?* yet, like a skilful Physician he would set every thing right that was broken, or out of Joint; make every crooked thing *streight*; and search and cure all our Grievances, even whether we would have Patience with him or no. He would do good while he received Evil, even while the Good he did was ill resented, even while the basest and worst Construction was put upon it. 'Twas not possible for all the Malice, Ingratitude, and Contradiction of a sinning World, to scandalize, or dismay him from this Employment. O matchless, exalted, finished Goodness! O perfect President! glorious Example! heavenly Original of a Publick Spirit! and yet after all, the Mark of it was set us here on Earth, and placed level to our Eye, being given us to imitate in the pure Person of a Man. And therefore,

Even above *Jesus Christ*, in the Order of Personality, sits the *Eternal Father*, all surpassing, and supream in Goodness. This was ever his most *testifying*, and shining Attribute: He never left himself without this Witness of his Being, in the darkest, and worst of Times; in that, he did good, and shewed down his Blessings from Heaven, and filled the Hearts of Mankind with Food and Gladness: Of whom the Sun is a little lively Emblem; shedding liberally over the World his refreshing and kindly Beams; every where diffusive of Life and Blessing; and the more diffusive the more illustrious; most of all magnifying and enlarging the Riches of his own Glory, by distributing them: Of whom even Jesus himself who was the express Image of his Glory, was humbly pleased to bear this absolute Testimony, saying, *There is none good but one, that is God.* Mar. 10. 18.

We are now got up to the Source, and Fountain Head of Goodness: And if we mark the mighty Scale we have ascended, every distinct *Advance* for Imitation has been high, and arduous; and yet, even the *supream* of all not so infinitely above our View, but we are commanded to come near, and take Example by it; nay, to make our Copy, in some measure, *perfect* as our Original: For it was in Respect to doing Good, that our Lord gave that Heroick Precept; *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

Mat. 5, 48.

Now therefore, to collect together the Force of this prolifick Argument all in one Breath; what greater and nobler Inducement can we need, to engage us Heart and Soul upon the Service of Mankind, than to consider, that we act herein after the superiour Office and Call of Kings, the more exalted Employment of Angels, the very Life and Exercise of the Son of God, yea up in some Resemblance to the very Character and Majesty of God himself. And who that has any Spark of the good Spirit in him, would not presently catch himself all on Fire, in such a Glorious and Godlike Emulation? The Roman Orator apply'd the Force of this Argument for a Stratagem, to wrench the Life of *Ligarius* out of the Hands of *Cæsar*: For, after many moving and masterly Turns of his Art, he closes in upon his Ambition with this sure Hold, *Homines enim ad Deos nulla re proprius accedunt, quam Salutem Hominibus dando*: if you would be deify'd, you must act the merciful and good Being. *Men never more nearly look like God, than in bending their Power to support and save*: For as his Majesty is, so is his Mercy. And to keep our Zeal fervent in this Emulation, let us consider,

Ecc. 2. 18.

6thly, That in delighting to bless Mankind, we not only resemble God, but most highly engage and please him: It is the surest Inlet into his Grace and Favour.

To

To do Good, and to communicate, forget not ; for with ^{Heb. 13.} such Sacrifices God is well pleased. This is the shining ^{16.} Quality that he chiefly delights in himself, and therefore it must needs look delightful and recommending to him, in his Creatures. The more nearly we act after the Likeness of God, the more we are sure to win upon his Love ; so that, as long as he has any Regard to his own Goodness, he must have a peculiar Esteem for all good Men. And how much Blessing and Happiness must follow upon our becoming Favourites with God, is more than can be exprest ; we may be sure as much temporal Prosperity and Welfare as his Wisdom shall know to be most expedient for us ; of which, the Word of God abounds with many plain and full Assurances: To mention only that by the Prophet David, *Trust in the Lord, Psal. 137. and be doing Good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

And thus far all temporal Promises for Encouragement to this Duty, I believe, have been pretty punctually fulfill'd ; that Men delighting in good Works, have seldom sunk under Want ; so that the Psalmist might justly affirm, *I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* ^{Psal. 137.} With some, perhaps, it may have the Countenance of an Objection, that, now and then, it is seen, the Charitable and Publick spirited Man does not prosper and thrive above his Neighbours : But our great Master has said, with good Reason, that *a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the things which he possesseth.* ^{Lu. 12. 15.} Superfluity is, by no means, the surest Mark of Divine Benediction.

The Wisdom of Providence is not so great a Deep, in dispensing but sparingly to good Men, as we may fancy : since it has generally been seen to succeed much better in the End, with a Man who has been able to

attain no more than sufficient to breed up his Family to good and creditable Employments, than with him who has fortunately amass'd Estate enough to set his Children above Business, and minister to their Idleness, Pride, and Luxury : The Sons of the former have gained that, by their own Virtue and Industry, to their lasting Comfort, which those of the latter have profusely spent, to their everlasting Undoing. After all, if the Diligence of a good Man should chance to be unluckily crossed and defeated, he has still this inward Peace and Satisfaction to stay him up, that he has try'd his honest Endeavours ; that the Wisdom of God sees it best for him to be held down to a mean and forward Opinion of this World ; and that he has the fairer and larger Prospect, arising in View of his Expectations, beyond the Grave. Such a settled Hope and Tranquillity of Conscience, is valuable above the wealthiest Possession upon Earth, and in Reversion it is Heaven. But

7thly, It must serve for a special Hint of Encouragement to a Charitable and Publick Spirit, that God has assured us, all Deeds of that kind shall weigh up against our Failings, shall skreen our Iniquities from his Justice, *1 Pet. 4. 8. shall cover a Multitude of Sins.* Daniel did not despair of recovering the lost Condition of Nebuchadnezzar, by putting him on this Expedient. *Wherefore, O King, Dan. 4. 27. let my Counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor.* And tho' it is possible, we may not have so enormous a Life to answer for as he had, yet this may be said to the Consciences of the very best of us, *What Man is he that liveth and sinneth not ?* and consequently that will not need very merciful Allowances at the Day of reckoning : We had need therefore lay in the best Foundation for it, that we can, before-hand.

And

And there is no other Way to provide a good Security, and lay up *Treasures* for our selves in the Bank of *Heaven*, but this I am persuading you to: God has encouraged us to charge upon him *there*, for every Good and Charitable Deed we do for the Needy *here*; he has promis'd to give us Credit for it, in our *grand* Account; it shall be allow'd us with ample Interest. In this only Case I may presume to say (the infinite Condescension of the Divine Spirit countenancing the Expression) that *in Deeds of Mercy and Charity, Man is the Creditor, and God the Debtor*: For so runs that Proverb of Solomon, *He that hath Pitty on the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord*; *and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* Prov. 19.
17.

And in striking off, and pardoning freely, to Men of Mercy and Goodness, God seems to be moved by the same *Bowels* as we are, who cannot choose but readily forgive and be Friends, where the Offender is in the main of a kind obliging Nature: And *Blessed are they Merciful for they shall obtain Mercy.* Mat. 5. 7. And even in the very *Reason* of the Case it self, it cannot well be otherwise. Mankind would be very ill sorted, at the great Day of Distinctions, if those who have made it the main Employment of their Lives to do good, should, for the common Infirmities of Nature, be herded among the Crowd of malicious and unrelenting Spirits. When I have had a Person in my Eye of an egregiously kind and charitable Disposition, and yet perhaps not without his Failings, I have been tempted to think, supposing God should (as he doubtless justly might) condemn such a one without Allowance, what he could do, or how he could bestow himself in the Condition of the accursed. To make a true Fiend, he must be temper'd with a deal of Envy, Spite, and ill Will; but in Feats of that kind, a good and merciful Man must needs be very untractable. Such a one had need undergo an absolute

lute Change for the worse, (which is contrary to what we depend on at the Resurrection) or he can make but a very uncouth Subject of the infernal Region. But to continue reasoning on the Encouragements to a Charitable and Publick Spirit: Methinks it should be a charming Persuasion to you, if you consider'd,

8^{thly}, That the Exercise of this Duty has the peculiar Satisfaction of a very comfortable and plentiful Condition always attending it; for it presupposes a great Share of self Ability, before we can be able to releive and succour others; we must *have freely received* before we can *freely give*: So that thus far it may be truly said, we have our Wages before we begin our Work. And though, in Comparison with our heavenly Father, after whose Example we are commanded to be perfect in this Duty, we are but scanty, poor, depending Creatures, and do continually need to be supply'd by him, in order to supply others; yet to some he is pleas'd to extend so very liberally, that they are rais'd to a Condition of doing great and glorious things for the Needy: To be as it were so many Gods to their Fellow Creatures, and to rectify and adjust, in some measure, the seeming Inequalities and Defects of common Providence.

But as to the *Son of Man*, who bent the whole Business of his Life this Way, and set us the compleatest Mark of a Publick Spirit to follow; a Mark that was truly perfect, and yet level to our Eye, and Inclination; in Respect to him, there are not many among us, but as to the natural and outward Means of *communicating*, and *doing good*, are more abundantly qualified, and stor'd than ever he was; and may do that by the ordinary Materials we have in our Hands, which he could not do without a Miracle; he being forc'd to make one Loaf go as far as a thousand, which others could

could spare without Difficulty. And are not the Acts and Exercises of a Duty exceeding easy and delightful, which flows always from a prosperous Condition? Are not those Fruits the sweetest and most delicious, that are born upon the richest and warmest Soil? Is not *our Lot fallen into a fair Ground*? Is not our Life of Tryal smooth and pleasant, even to the Envy of our Fellow Candidates, who are to act in the happiest Condition of this World, to be the happiest in the next; and have no greater Imposition than to exchange a rich Mansion for a vastly richer, and, as I may say, to step out of *Paradise* into *Heaven*? Well therefore might our Lord be wont to say, for it was egregiously said, that *It is more blessed to give than to receive*: And this Act. 20. 35 will lead me,

9thly, and Lastly, to lay before you, in full, the View of that abundant Reward, that every Way presents to a Charitable and a Publick Spirit. For, besides the Blessedness of the Condition a Man must be in to be capable of it, which was the Consideration I just parted from; the unspeakable Delight and Comfort that arises in the very Exercise of our good Works now, and the eternal Treasures of Bliss and Glory which they transfer to our Account in a future State must needs determine and crown our utmost Zeal and Application in the Performance of them.

There is for certain, even now, a most Divine and Heavenly Pleasure in doing Good; a Pleasure that is suited to the truest Movings of Humanity, that gratifies the purest of all our natural Inclinations, that Delights and Comforts even to the cherishing of our own Flesh, that runs along with our Affections and our Bowels so very sympathetically, that some good Men have indulged and epicuriz'd in

in it, till they have been tempted to call it downright *Sensuality*: And yet a Pleasure without the least Abatement or Allay. A Pleasure too, that does not lye lingring in the Futurities of a World to come, but commences with our very Act, nay before it; beginning even with our very Intensions: For we are no sooner entring upon a Design of serving Mankind, but we take up great Sums of Delight and Alacrity upon it, before-hand; and one Advantage here is, that the Pleasure does not leave us as soon as the Work is done, but lasts as long and lively upon our Minds, as our Memories will serve us to recollect it: In fine, a Pleasure that was by no means the Invention of Christianity, but was ever sensibly felt and taught in the darkest Times of Heathen Knowledge: Inso-much that old *Hesiod*, who in the main was as illiberal, poor, and selfish in this Part of Morality, as any Author I ever met with, had yet a lively Relish of it.

Op. & Di.

Ὅς μὲν γὰρ παν ἀνὴρ ἐθέλων, ὄγῃ καὶ μέγα δόσιν,

χαίρει τῷ δώρῳ, καὶ τέρπεται ὃν κατὰ θυμόν.

He who gives chearfully, and generously, takes a perfect Enjoyment in what he gives, and his Mind runs ravisht with the Duty.

Farther, this is a sort of Pleasure that is not limited to those good Deeds alone from whence it arises, but spreads and mingles with all our other Occupations, speeds us with Spirit and good Humour in all our Adventures and Designs, and carries us through the Work of this busy Life with Ease and Alacrity: And then it has this peculiar Virtue, that it does not forsake us at the Parting, but will stand us in the greatest Stead, when

when we have most Need of Comfort, nothing can so effectually soften and allay the Agonies of the last Conflict, as the Conscience of a well spent Life; it will pacify all Fears, and answer all Objections about dying, and smoothe the Way for a compos'd and hopeful Passage: It will take the Sting of Death clean out, and render it as painless and indolent as a Nap of Sleep.

In a Word, the Pleasure of well doing will not stay behind you when your *sojourning* here is ended, but cleaving to you, like *Ruth* to *Naomi*, it will not return from following after thee, but *whither thou goest it will go*: It will bear thee Company into the *Heavenly Canaan*. *Charity* has this peculiar Character above all other Graces, that it *never faileth*. Here it is a Taste of that perfect Bliss and Glory that entertains the eternal God, the compleatest Delight he takes in himself arising from a Sense (if I may so call it) of his own Goodness; and hereafter it shall be the Consummation of our Likeness and Happiness with God. Now it is an Antepast of Heaven, then it shall be our Heaven in Reality; *when*, for the little inconsiderable Cost and Care we are at for God's Family here, we shall receive an Inheritance *incorruptible, and undefiled, and that faileth not away, reserved in Heaven for us*.

1 Cor. 13.8

Having thus spent the main of my Time, to dispose and move you to be, upon the general, of a Charitable, Beneficent, and Publick Spirit; I must be the briefer in showing you,

II. That these Persuasions should have especial Force in disposing you to the great Work whereunto you are now chosen, as that whereon your Labours will be laid out for the Publick, to the highest and best Advantage. And this, I think, will be the properest Application I can make to the Doctrine, I have so much insisted on; it is indeed to

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apply

apply the Duty to the Object, and pass it immediately into Practice.

For, who are the proper Objects of a Charitable and a Publick Spirit? Are not the Distressed; the Poor, the Needy? Those who want our good Things are the fittest to whom we should dispense them.

It is true, the Poor are not the *sole* Objects of great and good Designs, especially in Men whose Minds and Conditions are enlarged above the common Level. The Welfare of the Church, and of those who serve at the Altar, the Civil Oeconomy, the Advancement of Learning and Knowledge, and the Reformation of Manners, are so many large and noble Occasions for great Men to lay out their Cares on, who have Abilities equal to them.

But, howsoever important of themselves, these are at present beside the Concern of your Body; and they are (blessed be the Divine Providence!) in some measure undertaken and cared for by other Powers. The Good of the Church is the principal Concern, and Glory of that most excellent *Queen* now ruling over us: She is, in very Deed, her *nursing Mother*; loving and cherishing our Religion even as her own Flesh; imparting, in a most unparalell'd Manner, her own princely Substance and Revenue for the Support of those many indigent Souls, who have long been left to *minister before the Lord* in Sordidness and Rags.

The Civil Oeconomy is the Province of other Bodies, who have sufficient Foundation, both of Substance and Authority, to make their Charge both easy and splendid. The *Encouragement of Learning* has been very bountifully tender'd by Benefactors of ever pious and blessed Memory: And the *Reformation of Manners* is the Care of Civil Magistrates, and of special Societies assembled

assembled, of their own free Zeal and Devotion, for that End. I do not say that in all these Cases such a abundant Provision is made, that no Space is left for a publick spirited Man to come in, and extend himself: They are not like so many profitable Funds, fill'd up, and shut against all farther Subscribers; their Occasions will call, and their Books lie open for our Charity, to the World's End.

But after all I say still, that the Poor are by far the most urgent, obvious, and unavoidable Objects of our compassionate Cares, having been so insufficiently and evilly cared for hitherto: They are not only a large Share, but a heavy Load of the Community: They are like *morbifick Humours* in *hydropical* Constitutions, which not only absorb and quench the Spirits, but encrease the Burthen of the Flesh; and so, at once, keep laying on the Task of Nature, and withdrawing the Means of undergoing it: And the Neglect of this Malady in Civil, as well as Natural Bodies, has been alike dangerous: The Body of this Nation has been so remiss, and mindless of it self under this Disease of the Poor, and, like the hydro-pical Man, has been so listless, and sluggish, and unactive under it, that it was hardly able to sustain and move any longer, under the unweildy insupportable Weight.

You of this City, whom God has blessed with diligent and industrious Spirits, and, as a Consequence of that with your sufficient Share of worldly Wealth, did timely and warily look about you, and see the Ruine you were sinking under: Every Year you saw both your Burthen, and your Expences growing upon you; your Abilities lessening, and your Load encreasing; and 'twas easy to guess whither this would tend, if some considerable Adventure were not try'd to

check the swelling Evil: And as the Expedient you went on was one of the first, if not an Original, of this Kind, so it stood you in much Counsel, Cost, and Resolution, to bring it to that hopeful State and Method it is now in: And your Success has been an awakening Call and Encouragement to the whole Nation, who, in many considerable Bodies, have form'd themselves after your President and Plan.

Now, as the beggarly and brutal Condition of the Poor, has been the greatest Burthen and Grief of this Nation, so it has been, of Course, the most considerable Subject for the generous Endeavours of great and good Men; which I am firmly convinced, can never be better apply'd to redress that Grievance, than in supporting such Incorporations as yours; whose Designs are to provide somewhat liberally, both for the Bodies and Minds of the poorer Sort: And therefore, that all the Persuasions I have used, to move you to a Publick Spirit on the general, should have special Force to determine you, with all imaginable Heart and Resolution, to the present Undertaking; as that whereas your Cares will be bestow'd to the best Effect, both for the Poor, and the Publick.

It should be no Surprize to you, that in laying the Foundation of a vast and glorious Design, the Charge and Difficulty should rise above your Estimate: There is no rearing a private House without this Disappointment. And the more goodly and popular your Design looks, if you meet with the more Censure, Despite, and Opposition, all this is no more than what is wont: And yet, maugre all, it may be mention'd to the Honour of your Undertaking, that, by the generous Gifts of well disposed Persons, you have cared for the Poor, through the

the most expensive and perplexed Part of the Work, without exceeding over the yearly Rate: And there is now a fair Hope and Prospect, that, in Time, even *that* shall be lessen'd and retrench'd: Such a good and charitable Design will always lie open, a perfect Temptation to great Men, to contribute and help you forward.

But should we put things to the last and worst Event that can be feared, and suppose that you could not compass to maintain the Poor at less than the full Assesment to which you are stinted, yet the Manner and Method in which you do it is an ample Satisfaction for the Charge, tho' it were to be larger. You find them not only in Food, but Education; you care for their Bodies and Minds too; you not only build them up in Bulk, but you rear them up Men. Your beggarly Youth were wont to grow up naturally and wildly, like rank and poisonous Weeds under Hedges, ever useless, and insignificant, if not worse; but you have transplanted them into Gardens, and Nurseries; you trim up the young Plants as they rise, and, by bestowing good Husbandry upon them, you improve and fit them for several good Ends and Uses, and make them yeild Virtue and Fruit to the Publick.

Remember how we beheld them heretofore, lousing like Swarms of Locusts in every Corner of the Streets, sordid without and Salvage within, over-run with Idleness and Sloth, consuming in Nastiness and Vermin, bred to no more Sense or Sound of God than to profane the sacred Name, ever grating the Ears of all sober Men with Cursing and Blasphemy, corrupting one another still downward toward the Brute, the great Grief and Scandal of human Nature. But, by the Blessing of God on your pious and charitable

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Endeavours, how is the Scene and the Face of Poverty chang'd in this City? We now see it look neat, and wholsome, I had almost said becoming: it has been an Entertainment to the Curiosity of the greatest Personages. We go into your Hospitals, and behold your Poor, not like disorderly Nests of Drones, but like Swarms of diligent and laborious Bees learning to gather in, and lay up Hony in their own Hives; every Countenance clean and chearful; every Hand at Work; and the Leisures fill'd up with liberal Discipline for the Improvement of their Souls. A goodly and a glorious Sight indeed!

In fine, that which should be sufficient to convince Gainsayers, that your Design is advantageous and excellent, is this, that of the many Members which have come in among you full of Prejudice and ill Opinion towards it, I never met with any one yet who came away with the same disaffected Mind, but many have chang'd, if possible, to very Biggots of the *Workhouse*, and have publickly pleaded for it against all Opposition.

Persevere therefore united, and resolv'd, in the great and good Work you begun: And tho' you have met with many and heavy Difficulties, and such as would likely have crush'd and sunk a Body, less considerable than yours in Substance and Spirit; yet, God be prais'd, you have now surmounted them all. You have pass'd through all the Defiles, and Streights of your Business, and have now a plain and open Feild of Industry before you. And the Seeds of Diligence and Education which you are sowing among your Youth now, may you live to see a good Harvest of here, and an ample and glorious Reward of hereafter! according to that good Prefage in the Book of Wisdom, *Glorious is the Fruit of good Labours*: Or, in that good Word of Prophecy, *To him that soweth in Righteousness shall be a sure Reward.* Amen.

Wisd. 3. 15

Prov. 11.
18.

F I N I S.



The Names of **BENEFACTORS**
to the Poor under the Care of the
Corporation of Guardians in the City
of *Bristol* this 29th Day of *May*, 1704.
(viz.)

		l ^{rs} .	s.	d.
1698.	D R. Edward Tyson of London. _____	100	00	00
	Samuel Wallis, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	Sir John Dudlestone, Knt. and Bart. _____	100	00	00
	Mr. Edward Martindale, Merchant. _____	100	00	00
	John Day, Esq; _____	50	00	00
	Nathaniel Wade, Esq; _____	50	00	00
	Mr. Edward Lloyd, Merchant. _____	50	00	00
1699	Mr. Thomas Cary. _____	10	00	00
	The Right Reverend Father in God, John Lord } Bishop of Bristol. _____	50	00	00
	Thomas Foley of Whitly-Court, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	John Hanbury of Ponty Poole, Esq; _____	50	00	00
	Robert Tate, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	Mr. Charles Sloper Chancellor, &c. _____	10	00	00
	Mr. William Weaver, Tanner. _____	40	00	00
	Francis Whitchurch, Esq; _____	25	00	00
	Thomas Edwards, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	Mr. Edward Hacket. _____	10	00	00
	Mr. Thomas Tyler. _____	10	00	00
1700.	Mr. Isaac Davis. 25. l. and by his Will 100. _____	125	00	00
	William Jackson, Esq; _____	50	00	00
	Mr. Thomas Callowhil. _____	100	00	00
	Mr. William Andrews. _____	25	00	00
	Mr. George Mason. _____	100	00	00
	Sir William Daines, Knight. _____	100	00	00
	Richard Bayly, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	Abraham Elton, Esq; _____	100	00	00
	Mr. Samuel Jacob. _____	20	00	00

Carried over, 1775 00 00

	l.	s.	d.
Brought from the other Side. —————	1775	00	00
Mr. Benjamin Parot. —————	20	00	00
Mr. William James. —————	10	00	00
Mr. Nathaniel Toriano of London Merchant. ———	40	00	00
John Barcheler, Esq; —————	50	00	00
William Swymmer, Esq; —————	100	00	00
Peter Sammers present Mayor. —————	100	00	00
Sir Thomas Day, Knight. —————	50	00	00
Edward Colston of London, Esq; —————	200	00	00
Captain Arthur Grant. —————	10	00	00
Mr. John Worgan by his Will. —————	50	00	00
Captain John Price. —————	50	00	00
Mr. Simon Hurrele. —————	50	00	00
Mr. Nathaniel Kill. —————	30	00	00
Captain James Harris. —————	50	00	00
George Stephens, Esq; —————	20	00	00
Mr. Henry Sampson. —————	10	00	00
Mr. Anthony Swymmer. —————	50	00	00
Mr. Alexander Cairnes of London. —————	10	00	00
Mr. Samuel Whichurch. —————	20	00	00
Mr. Charles Harford, Sen. —————	60	00	00
Samuel Wallis, Esq; a former Benefactor, the In- } terest for a Sermon, &c. —————	25	00	00
Mr. Jeremiah Gough of London. —————	25	00	00
Mr. Edward Martindale a former Benefactor, Va- } lue in Houles. —————	40	00	00
John Swymmer Esq; by his Will. —————	50	00	00
Mr. Phillip Read by his Will. —————	10	00	00
Isaac Davis a former Benefactor by his Will. ———	100	00	00
Mr. Robert Cooper, Arch-Deacon. —————	10	00	00
Mr. Stephen Crespion, Prebendary. —————	10	00	00
Captain William Smith. —————	10	00	00
John Lloyd, Esq; —————	20	00	00
Mr. William Langton of Derham. —————	200	00	00
William Whitehead, Esq; —————	50	00	00
Mr. Thomas Padget by his Will. —————	10	00	00
Mr. John Cook. —————	25	00	00

In all 3320 00 00

